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The Playground

Playground Equipment



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The Playground

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PURPOSE:

To promote normal wholesome play and public recreation

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THE PLACE AND LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT WITH REFERENCE TO RECREATION*

LUTHER HALSEY GULICK, M.D.

New York City

It is obvious that we must have streets and that making them is a function that belongs to all of us together. It is a community function, and a thing that should be taken care of by the city government,—not as in previous ages, where private roads were made and everybody was taxed who used them. They belong to all. Streets are made by the city government, not to take the place of individual initiative, but to give opportunity and freedom for traffic, for visiting each other, for social relations. Government in the control of streets, allowing automobiles and carriages to go only one way on one side of the streets, and only allowing them to stop one way, is for the purpose of liberty, not for restriction. The individual is slightly incommoded by having to turn his machine around when he wishes to stop, but it is in the interests of freedom, not in the interests of restriction. So with reference to our police department. The object of the police department and of law is the promotion of freedom, for it is only in a community where there is law administered that we are all free and may come and go with safety. The law is primarily promotive in its nature and not restrictive in its character, except as it is restrictive when it comes to interfere with those individuals who would violate the rights of the rest of the people. This aspect of law is fundamentally promotion,—promotion of liberty, promotion of the opportunity of the individual, which I believe is the most fundamental element in law itself. How does this apply to recreation? We need to work together with the official city or community machinery whatever it is, in those things which involve control or taxes.

An example of a way in which we are all doing this is in our parks. No one questions that parks should be paid for by the community for the use of all of the community. This does not prevent the individual who is wealthy from purchasing large landed estates for his own. But most of us cannot because of the amount of money involved have our own private parks. So we combine,

* Address, Fourth Annual Congress of Playground Association of America, Rochester, N. Y., June 10, 1910.

SOCIAL STREET SQUAD

using our city official machinery, and buy ourselves parks, and make rules and regulations which give liberty and enjoyment to all of us in the use of these parks. More and more it is true that the parks are becoming like the modern library. The old library had a person to guard the books. The new librarian promotes the use of the books. The new park superintendent is a man who promotes the use of the park as earnestly as if it were a commercial enterprise. So we are promoting parks by putting in them, in appropriate places and in suitable ways appliances by which individuals may enjoy them,—sand piles for the little ones, swings and seesaws. This is related definitely to the health and morality of the community.

In a new way, school property belongs to all of us and we are beginning to use it in a far broader way than we originally conceived of,—for evening lectures for the community as a whole, for boys' clubs, for social centers, summer schools, and places where boys and girls may meet for wholesome recreation. We are using the official governmental machinery for the larger recreational life of the entire people. Thus with the public schools athletic league. It is neither a time nor a space relation, but a human activity relation which involves thinking out ways of bringing to the boys and girls opportunity for wholesome exercise and stimulus for the sports which modern conditions seem to render rather difficult.

SOCIAL STREET SQUAD

I wonder whether we might not develop a social street squad, as we already have a traffic squad. The traffic squad in a city is not for purposes of interfering with traffic, but for promoting it. If we had a group of persons officially connected with the city machinery who should first of all examine all the streets of the city to see what kind of traffic is found on them, certain streets would be found which are used for thoroughfares and for through traffic; others only for going to the houses on those streets. This differentiates those streets. On the arteries of traffic there should be no play by children; on the streets which are only used for purposes of going to and from the houses I believe that it may be eminently proper and not only feasible, but necessary, to have play and that we might have a social street squad whose business it should be to promote the social use of such streets in suitable ways. Baseball, for example, as Mr. Lee has pointed out, is destructive and cannot be played on any street,—not so with playground ball. If somebody could intro-

SOCIAL STREET SQUAD

duce into this city for use in streets that kind of playground ball which is already in use in Chicago and other cities it would be a wonderful thing. Playground ball is safe for houses.

The playground can never meet adequately the needs of the play of the young people of the city, or of the little children outside of their own homes. Why not put on these non-traffic streets, at frequent intervals, sand piles for the little children? Some of the cities of Germany have them. Playgrounds bring many children together and increase social friction. Social friction is lessened when instead of putting all the apparatus together we separate it. On a long parkway such as we have at Riverside Drive in New York City, where tens of thousands of children go for play and recreation every day, it would be better, rather than having a few playgrounds at great intervals, to have every hundred yards or two, two or three swings or seesaws, and little sand piles. These poor little children of the wealthy go to the Drive, but there is nothing for them to do. Why should we not have sand piles for them? There is plenty of room. Playing in the sand would enrich their lives wonderfully. The children should not be aggregated, but spread out so as to use the whole splendid Drive. A social promotion squad of the streets could study these things and bring about one thing after another which they saw to be feasible to fit in with the needs of the city and with the desires of the citizens. Our streets have always had a social function and they do now. We have in practically all of the cities of America municipal ordinances against play in the streets and arrest boys for playing ball on the traffic streets; but everywhere in America in spite of all these laws, we allow the children to play on the non-traffic streets. Let us study the real situation and make our laws correspond to the real facts, not to the pseudo facts, or to theory. Our laws no doubt correspond to the theory that children should not play in streets, but that there should be no play on any street is not necessary nor wise, nor possible. Call a meeting of the boys of your city,—the leaders from each block, say, and explain the scheme to them. Tell them they are going to be allowed to play certain kinds of games which will not interfere with traffic on condition that they absolutely stop all playing or loitering on traffic streets. Get into the minds of the children the fact that it is their city as much as it is anybody's city, that they are a part of the law enforcing mechanism, that the thing belongs to them. They will respond.

RECREATION COMMISSIONS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITY RECREATION COMMISSIONS

I have spoken so far about recreation functions which are inherent in certain city departments,—the department of education, the department of parks, the department of streets. These inherent recreation functions can never be taken away by any other organized body because they are inherent in the nature of the organization itself. The recreation of the school room is part of education. It cannot be taken over by some other body. There are, however, certain other aspects which do not belong essentially to any existing civic organization and it seems to me those cities, and there are something like twenty of them, that are providing a new wheel in the city machinery, to look after these things are on the right track. Public recreation commissions they are sometimes called. Here are some of the important unoccupied fields which city recreation commissions may well consider.

1. Promote the proper use of abused and wasted time. Take the Fourth of July. It is a national menace at present. It has in itself the possibility of a splendid occasion to teach that which is the fundamental fact in American history, liberty and law. What needs to be done is not so much to have restrictive measures against the use of explosives, as to have co-operative endeavor to make the day rich in enjoyment. Scores of American cities within the last three years, and particularly within the last year, have taken this day, which during the past twenty or thirty years has been a means of killing or mutilating annually between a thousand and twelve hundred children, and converted it into an occasion which will be a benefit, not a menace, to the whole community. We have been forwarding this idea but are not the official body to do it. It involves legislation and the use of the city machinery. Independence Day commissions are well enough, but they are only for one day. We have a number of other days to celebrate. What can be done with Labor Day? In Belle Isle, south of Detroit, I am told that Labor Day has been made an occasion when all sorts of competitions are held. The central feature of the program is awarding prizes for children's labor,—for the best gardens that children themselves have made, the best vegetables that they have raised, the best pies and cakes, and pieces of handiwork, kites, boats, all sorts of things that *represent the children's own activities*, so that for two or three months before Labor Day these children are working towards this

RECREATION COMMISSIONS

holiday, which brings the whole community together, dignifying and recognizing the place of skill in the use of the body and hands. This does not need a separate committee. It can be managed by the committee that arranges for the Fourth of July,—and so with others of our national holidays which in the main now are worse than wasted. The national holidays correspond to the vacant lots which in so many American communities are not now in use or that have often been used as dumping places. The vacant lots correspond in space to what the Fourth of July corresponds in time. Now we are taking these vacant spaces and making them into beautiful and useful playgrounds and parks. Let us do the same with our vacant and menacing public holiday times. Somebody must do it. It involves certain kinds of legislation.

2. The relation of young people to each other. What opportunity is there in each community for young people to come together with wholesome things to do, particularly with the co-operation of their elders? The family cannot maintain its integrity with reference to work because of modern specialized conditions,—city and country have put the different members of the family doing different things, but recreation is the one thing left in which the whole family can co-operate. Let us find out about these dance halls we are hearing so much about. Let us learn how it is possible to have young people with the older people having wholesome enjoyable natural relations with each other. That involves city machinery because it involves legislative control of the dance halls and the relation of the dance halls to the saloons.

3. Promote the "boy scout" movement which takes hold of the gang instinct which is now developed so as to be anti-social, and make it into an instrument for promoting civics, loyalty and patriotism.

4. Use of back yards. Why not encourage families to have little gardens for children in the back yards? Workshops in the home most of us cannot afford; why not have half a dozen families unite in providing a workshop, with tools, where the boys can make their kites, boats and paddle wheels, and all the things that you and I used to make with the tools that belonged to our fathers. These back-yard gardens and workshops can be correlated with the Labor Day idea, and with the after-hour school activities.

5. Lastly,—the matter of discovering unused city property.

RECREATION COMMISSIONS

There has never been a survey made but it has been discovered that there are places which have belonged to the city for years and not used which might be used for playgrounds. It ought to be somebody's business to hunt up such places and put them to use.

For the first time in the history of the world we are beginning to have leisure as a people. The old Greeks had leisure, but in the most brilliant page of the history of mankind, the age of Pericles, leisure was bought at the price of having four slaves to every free man. That brilliant period was brilliant for the few, paid for with the lives of the many. Now we have the great machines that are doing the muscular work of the world. The long hours of severe labor, in some cases from twelve to sixteen hours a day, sap the life out of men and women. That long day is nearly gone. The time is already here for many people, except for those labor employers,—they have to work all day—when they can work eight or ten hours a day and be free to live the broader life, not merely the life of work and sleep. This is the first time in the history of the world that this has been possible. Whether this leisure shall tend toward license and degradation of character or whether it shall make for the final development of the things of the spirit depends upon how hard we take hold of it as communities, not as individuals. It is no longer in the hands of the individual. Here individuals are relatively helpless; hence the reason for city recreation commissions.

We want to have prosperity; but in order that prosperity and material gain shall not prove a curse instead of a blessing, we must do all we can to promote the refining influences of life—proper means of recreation, wholesome enjoyment, the cultivation of those capacities for delight and pleasure which alone make the gains of prosperity a blessing to the human soul.

CHARLES E. HUGHES.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF A PLAYGROUND*

The Committee has seen fit to confine its study and report to what might be considered one of the live issues in the recreation movement as a whole, the organization and administration of playgrounds from the public and institutional or municipal point of view.†

This point of view involves the following factors among others:

1. The scope and emphasis of the playground or recreation movement—educational, recreational, economic, municipal, social; hence,
2. The relation of its activities and their direction to the public and parochial schools, the parks, various city departments having facilities available for recreational activities—such as streets and alleys, docks, etc., or as the health, charity, police and law departments having a direct or indirect interest in the results of such activities; and
3. Various social agencies of a voluntary character conducting or promoting recreational activities.
4. The conception which various voluntary and municipal institutions have of their functions.

Any consideration of the form and methods which the organization and administration of a public recreation system would follow in any city must take into consideration all of these factors, together with the purely local ones of custom and tradition and the legal form of the municipality.

* Report given at Fourth Annual Congress of Playground Association of America, June 9, 1910.

Committee.—George W. Ehler, Baltimore, Md., Chairman; Mrs. E. L. Baldwin, San Francisco, Cal.; John Bradford, Pensacola, Fla.; Dwight F. Davis, St. Louis, Mo.; Arthur W. Dunning, M.D., St. Paul, Minn.; George M. Forbes, LL.D., Rochester, N. Y.; Frank L. Fuller, Seattle, Wash.; Thomas F. Harrington, M.D., Boston, Mass.; Kendrick C. Hill, Trenton, N. J.; Henry F. Kallenberg, M.D., Chicago, Ill.; David I. Kelley, New York City; George A. Parker, Hartford, Conn.; W. C. Peters, M.D., Bangor, Me.; Louis W. Shouse, Kansas City, Mo.; Hon. William H. Staake, Philadelphia, Pa.; Hon. Harry L. Taylor, Buffalo, N. Y.

† The organization and administration of playgrounds is a subject that falls quite naturally into two sub-divisions, one having to do with the work and activities of a particular playground, the other with the administration and supervision of playgrounds as a voluntary or municipal undertaking. Both of these divisions have been treated quite at length in the report of the Committee of a Normal Course in Play, particularly from the point of view of the professional playground director. It would seem almost superfluous to consider this subject again from this point of view at this time.

PLAYGROUND ADMINISTRATION

At the First Play Congress in Chicago in 1907 this subject was discussed in a general manner and after a consideration of the municipality versus the board of education the general consensus of opinion was that the board of education was the proper department to control and administer playgrounds, based largely on the educational aspect of play, at that time the dominant view.

Since then there has been a tremendous development in the facilities for play. There has come to be a more general recognition of other aspects of the function of play in the life not only of the child but also of the youth and the adult. Its purely recreative values in the case of adults, its tremendous social significance in the lives of young men and women, its relation to neighborhood solidarity and efficiency, the fact that it involves the great question of the leisure time of all the people and has fundamental implications for the moral, ethical and physical health of the whole state, makes necessary a most careful study of the various experiences through which cities have passed, together with an inquiry into the trend of modern municipal government, its relation to the people in their daily lives and the functions its various instrumentalities are to exercise in the coming city, before we can come to any final conclusions and recommend a form of organization and administration that will insure growth and development and not handicap, hamper and restrict the play movement.

In view of the magnitude of the subject, the Committee has therefore restricted its work to an inquiry into the conditions that obtain at the present time in various cities, the opinions that are entertained in regard to prevalent methods and an attempt to discern the present general tendencies.

To this end the following questionnaire was sent out:

REPORT CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION OF A SYSTEM OF PLAYGROUNDS

1. Name of City.....
2. Population of City (latest estimate).....
3. Total number of playgrounds.....
4. When was playground work in your city started?.....

PLAYGROUND ADMINISTRATION

5. Organizations and city departments conducting or controlling playgrounds and the number of playgrounds under each:

Name of Dept. or Organization	No. of Playgrounds
.....	
6. If two or more departments or organizations work together or are otherwise related, please indicate them and describe their relationships.

7. What are the weak points of your present methods of organization and administration?.....
8. What are the strong points?.....
9. What do you consider the best forms of organization and administration of a system of playgrounds: (a) voluntary organization with private support or with city appropriations; (b) a city department of parks, schools, health, etc.; (c) a special commission; (d) a director?.....
10. Please indicate the reasons for your selection.....
11. What are your objections to one or more of the other ordinary methods?.....

Answered by

Official position (organization or municipal dept.).....

Address

Date

April 25, 1910.

Replies were received from 89 cities having playgrounds, 14 about to open playgrounds and 18 having none at all—a total of 112 cities.

The 89 having playgrounds represent 27 states and territories and 1 province, have 713 playgrounds and report a population of 15,169,000, about 1-6 of the population of the United States.

The following table gives these 29 states, territories and province, and in each the number of cities reporting, the number of playgrounds, the population of the cities reporting and the names of the chief cities.

TABLE I. STATES REPORTING

Number of States Reporting	29
Number of Cities.....	89
Number of Playgrounds.....	713
Population.....	15,162,500

State	No. Cities	No. Playgrounds	Population	Chief Cities
California	3	22	812,000	San Francisco Los Angeles
Connecticut	2	2	16,000	
Dist. of Columbia.....	1	38	317,000	Washington
Florida	1	6	25,000	Pensacola
Illinois	4	35	3,093,000	Chicago
Indiana	3	11	115,000	Evansville
Iowa	1	4	15,000	Marshall
Kentucky	2	6	67,000	Lexington
Maine.....	3	7	66,000	Lewiston
Manitoba	1	15	150,000	Bangor Winnipeg
Maryland	1	29	600,000	Baltimore
Massachusetts	15	137	1,210,000	Boston Lowell Springfield
Michigan.....	2	17	490,000	Detroit Kalamazoo
Minnesota.....	2	25	530,000	St. Paul Minneapolis
Mississippi	1	7	10,000	Greenville
Missouri	1	8	750,000	St. Louis
New Jersey.....	6	49	593,500	Newark Paterson Camden
New York.....	7	25	669,000	Buffalo Syracuse
Ohio.....	6	30	1,025,000	Cleveland Columbus Dayton
Ontario	2	14	425,000	Toronto Hamilton
Oregon	1	6	220,000	Portland
Pennsylvania	10	138	2,520,000	Philadelphia Pittsburg Scranton
Rhode Island.....	3	20	299,000	Providence
South Dakota	1	2	11,000	Leadville
Tennessee.....	1	4	180,000	Memphis
Texas	1	2	100,000	Dallas
Virginia.....	2	10	144,100	Richmond
Washington	2	9	272,000	Seattle
West Virginia	1	1	45,000	Wheeling
Wisconsin.....	3	34	307,000	Milwaukee

Cities having a population 100,000 or over..... 32

Cities having a population over 25,000 and under 100,000..... 35

Cities having a population under 25,000..... 22

Organizations and Departments Conducting Playgrounds

Cities	Per Cent of Total	Playgrounds Reported Under
49	54	Voluntary control
24	27	Park control
22	24	Public school control
15	17	Commission control
5	6	City control

Cities reporting playgrounds under control of two or more organizations or departments, 24 of the 89.

PLAYGROUND ADMINISTRATION

WEAK AND STRONG POINTS IN PRESENT SYSTEM OF CONTROL

The writers expressed themselves quite freely as to the weak and strong points of the present systems of control. The following is a brief characterization of the various opinions:

Voluntary Control

Weakness—Lack of funds and public interest—almost unanimous.

Strength—Few strong points expressed. Chiefly independence, absence of politics, enthusiasm.

Park Control

Weakness—No supervision seems to be the frequent lack. Park officials often inclined to believe there are no weak points. Park officials ignorant of function of playgrounds. No co-operation with other boards.

Strength—Boards frequently non-partisan and selected for interest in parks.

Public School Control

Weakness—Insufficient supply of trained leaders. Ineffective in summer. In many cities playgrounds not open in vacation.

Strength—Buildings and ground available. Close to children. Experience for school teachers.

Commission Control

Weakness—None. Commissions too large. Lack of co-operation with other boards.

Strength—Correlating of various interests. Direct interest of commissioners in work to be done. No politics.

A careful reading of the expressions concerning the weak and strong points of present methods of organization and administration of a playground would seem to indicate that the chief problems in the minds of the most of the writers were those of finance, public interest, competency of officials and politics.

Each form of control was characterized to a greater or less extent by one or more of these problems. In but few instances does it appear that the function of playgrounds, or the character of the work to be done, or any particular idea of the significance

PLAYGROUND ADMINISTRATION

of the playground or recreation movement were factors in determining the weakness or strength of any form of control. This may have been due to the form of the questions. An examination of the suggestions as to the best forms of control and the reasons therefor are somewhat more illuminating and helpful.

The following, Table II, presents the suggestions made as to the best forms of control with a classification of the present methods in the cities from which the various recommendations come and include the playground relationship of the person making the suggestion:

TABLE II. FORMS OF CONTROL

Form Recommended	Cities	Present Control					No. Play	Answers by					Popula- tion
		Com.	Park	Vol.	P. S.	City		Vol.	Park	Com.	P. S.	No. Ans.	
Commission	26	11	7	15	3	3	373	13	3	10	..	26	8,755,500
Public Schools	10	2	2	1	7	..	57	1	1	2	6	10	1,589,000
Parks and Schools...	7	..	5	2	2	..	84	1	4	..	2	7	1,047,000
Park Department...	7	..	3	3	2	..	33	2	3	..	2	7	571,000
Voluntary	11	2	3	9	1	..	70	10	..	1	..	11	1,493,000
Director	8	..	2	4	2	2	31	3	2	1	1	7	782,000
City Dep't or Support	11	..	2	8	2	..	40	9	..	..	2	11	698,000
No Opinion	9	..	..	7	3	..	25	6	1	..	3	9	221,000
Totals	89	15	24	49	22	5	713	45	14	14	16	88	15,156,000

This table presents some interesting data. Omitting those who express no opinion, we have 79 correspondents reporting for 80 cities. The 79 correspondents are classified as follows:

Connected with voluntary organizations, 39 to 50 per cent.

Connected with public schools, 13 to 16 per cent.

Connected with park boards, 13 to 16 per cent.

Connected with playground commissions, 14 to 17 per cent.

Classifying the correspondents with reference to their recommendations we find the following exhibit:

Correspondents	Recommendations							Totals
	Com.	P. S.	Pk. & P. S.	Park	Vol.	Dir	City	
Voluntary	13	1	1	2	10	3	9	39
Park Board	3	1	4	3	—	2	—	13
Commission	10	2	—	—	1	1	—	14
Public School	—	6	2	2	—	1	2	13
Totals	26	10	7	7	11	7	11	79

PLAYGROUND ADMINISTRATION

Of the 39 "voluntary" correspondents, 13 recommend playground commissions and 10 "voluntary" control.

Of the 13 park board writers, 3 recommend a commission, 3 park board control, while four recommend the co-operation of the park and school boards, making 7 of the 13 favoring the commission idea in some form. Of the 14 commission correspondents, 10 favor commission control, while two favor school control. A larger percentage of this group than any other explicitly favor their own form of control.

Of the public school group, none favor the commission, 6 recommending school control, the others scattering.

From this we secure the following exhibit:

Recommendations	Correspondents				
	Vol.	Park	School	Comm.	Total
Commission.....	13	3	—	10	26
School.....	1	1	6	2	10
Park and schools.....	1	4	2	—	7
Parks.....	2	3	2	—	7
Director.....	3	2	1	1	7
Some city department	9	—	2	—	11
Voluntary organization.	10	—	—	1	11

We find the commission idea favored by 26 correspondents or 33 per cent while the remainder are scattered: 13 per cent favoring schools alone; parks and schools combined, parks alone and special director each being favored by 8 per cent; 14 per cent favoring voluntary control; and 14 per cent favoring some city department.

Classifying the present forms of control according to the form recommended we secure a most interesting exhibit:

Recommendations	Cities	Present Form					
		Com.	Pk.	Vol.	P. S.	City	Total
Commission.....	26	11	7	15	3	3	39
Public school.....	10	2	2	1	7	—	12
Parks and schools.....	7	—	5	2	2	—	9
Park department.....	7	—	3	3	2	—	8
Voluntary.....	11	2	3	9	1	—	15
Director.....	8	—	2	4	2	2	10
Some city department.....	11	—	2	8	2	—	12
	80	15	24	42	19	5	105

PLAYGROUND ADMINISTRATION

In the 26 cities favoring commission control are 39 controlling organizations, there being more commissions, park boards and voluntary organizations than in any group recommending other than commission control. Over half of these 80 cities have voluntary organizations at work.

Finally, the population of the various groups together with the number of playgrounds gives another significant emphasis:

Form Recommended	Cities	No. of Playgrounds	Population
Commission	26	373	8,755,500
Public School	10	57	1,589,000
Parks and Schools.....	7	84	1,047,000
Park Department.....	7	33	571,000
Voluntary	11	70	1,493,000
Director	8	31	782,000
Some City Department.....	11	40	698,000
	80	688	11,935,000

The 26 cities recommending commission control, have over 53 per cent of the total playgrounds reported and over 70 per cent of the population.

Of the 26 cities recommending commission control there are

11 of 250,000 or more population

4 " 100,000 " " "

3 " 50,000 " " "

6 " 25,000 " " "

2 " 10,000 " " "

Recommending public school control are

3 of 250,000 or more population

3 " 25,000 " " "

4 " 10,000 " " "

Recommending park and school co-operative control are

1 of 250,000 or more population

1 " 100,000 " " "

1 " 50,000 " " "

4 " 25,000 " " "

PLAYGROUND ADMINISTRATION

Recommending park control are

2	of	100,000	or	more	population
2	"	50,000	"	"	"
2	"	25,000	"	"	"
1	"	10,000	"	"	"

Recommending voluntary control are

2	of	250,000	or	more	population
1	"	100,000	"	"	"
3	"	50,000	"	"	"
3	"	25,000	"	"	"
2	"	10,000	"	"	"

From this data it is fair to conclude that in the cities where the interest is greatest, the problems most varied and the movement furthest developed the distinct tendency is toward the commission idea.

The reasons given for the preferences indicated above may be characterized as follows:—

Commission

Greater interest, broader ideas, efficiency and economy because selected with reference to playground idea. Harmony, co-ordination and combination of different bodies having limited interests in this direction among other duties. A park superintendent says, "The object is large enough for a separate legal body to attend to, in all its phases."

Public School

Chiefly because of educational feature of play.

Parks and Schools in co-operation

Parks to supply and maintain grounds. Schools to supply teachers and directors for educational reasons.

Park Department

Parks ought to be playgrounds and park department should have control over ground.

Voluntary

Easier to interest service of best people. Absence of politics.

PLAYGROUND ADMINISTRATION

Director

Expert service and concentration of responsibility.

City Control

Finance.

Objections offered to various forms of control are as follows:

Voluntary Organizations

Insufficient funds, aspect of charity, not permanent, inefficient, irresponsible, no authority, interest difficult to sustain, at the expense of the few.

Various City Departments

Scope limited by department idea of its functions, interest in and knowledge of playgrounds secondary and inadequate, no social viewpoint, present duties sufficient to absorb all interest and energy. Departments other than schools are not close to children. Political considerations and changes in administrations tend to demoralization of efficiency and ideals.

TENDENCY—PLAYGROUND OR RECREATION COMMISSION

In conclusion it would seem from the evidence presented herewith that there is a very distinct tendency in the direction of the organization of playground or recreational commissions, composed of people having an appreciation of both the school and the park ideals, but with a social insight that permits a deeper appreciation of the meaning of "leisure" from the standpoint of civic righteousness and efficient citizenship and the physical and moral welfare of the race. Such commissions tend to have jurisdiction and direction over recreational activities of the widest scope and use facilities provided by the park, the school, the street, the dock, or any other municipal board or department, or special facilities secured in conformity with a city-wide plan and designed with special reference to their recreational function and use.

It appears that there is recognition that provision for adequate public recreation is a special problem, involving on the one hand social and educational aspects for which park boards and employees ordinarily have neither training, experience nor traditions, and a use of grass, shrubbery, trees, open spaces and electric lights quite at variance with the accepted park idea; and on the other hand

BEST FORM OF ADMINISTRATION FOR PLAYGROUNDS

placing an emphasis on hygiene, exercise, pleasure and informality which is not in harmony with the usual formal school ideals or methods and which in the very nature of the case can not be appreciated at their real values by many school boards and teachers.

Throughout the replies to the Committee's inquiry there was constant emphasis on the necessity of an expert playground director with trained worker in general charge of all activities and employed the year round.

It further appears that the propaganda is chiefly carried on as yet by voluntary organizations, which are seeking to develop an enlightened public opinion and to establish standards that shall be maintained when in the course of time it becomes wise or expedient to turn over their problem to the municipality to which almost all agree that it belongs.

GEO. W. EHLER,
Chairman.

BEST FORM OF ADMINISTRATION FOR PLAYGROUNDS

JOSEPH LEE

President Playground Association of America

The question is not an easy one to decide,—particularly to decide for all places. In favor of the school committee carrying on the playgrounds is the fact that it has charge of the school yards, of the play in recess and of the exercises inside the schools. It should also in some way regulate inter-scholastic athletics. It is now more and more having to do with medical inspection and tests of physical fitness. Also it is in the education business, and play is perhaps the most important part of the child's education.

The teachers, moreover, should probably always constitute the rank and file of the directors on the playgrounds, because they have the requisite character and training for the educational side of the work, because they can get the unathletic children, who constitute our principal problem, out on the playgrounds instead of leaving play merely for the experts, and because playground work reacts most favorably on the teachers themselves and on the school.

On the other hand, playgrounds are largely on the parks, and the school committee is not strong on shrubs, drainage, retaining walls and the like. These considerations favor the park department.

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

Play in the streets is perhaps the most important part of the play problem simply because it is and will probably always be the greatest part. So that the street department can put in a good claim to being considered.

Then Mr. Ehler has well said that this proposition is larger than play as commonly understood. Our subject includes recreation in general, and that includes, dances, zoos, beaches, and band concerts. In some ways it seems as if the leader of the municipal band was your man. Also there are theatres, which must be regulated before our problem can be said to be properly dealt with.

Now I am bringing up all these things not to show what the solution is, but merely to show that it is not one that can be arrived at offhand, and to indicate that different communities may perhaps wisely solve it in different ways. Whatever you do, make it clear exactly what powers and duties each department has.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EQUIPMENT*

The basis of this report is the immediate need in our playground movement of information concerning equipment for *supervised public playgrounds*, such as school-yard, public park, community and village playgrounds.

The Committee is not unmindful of the need of special adaptation of the playground in such places as hospitals for the insane, penal and other institutions, nor of the service that may be rendered in devising proper equipment for the back-yard, picnic ground or roof garden. These special adaptations cannot be given consideration in this report because of the more fundamental need of discussing, first of all, the problems which concern those who are supporting the playground idea as a public institution for average and normal boys, girls and young folks.

This report, therefore, contains:

1. A general statement concerning the relation of playground equipment to the playground movement.
2. A preliminary intensive study of apparatus and accessories.

* Report given at Fourth Annual Congress of Playground Association of America, June 8, 1910.

WHICH IS BETTER?



PEEKING UNDER SALOON DOORS

OR



PLAYING A GAME ON THE GIANT STRIDE

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

GENERAL STATEMENT

The American playground movement is characteristically American in that it has not only come upon us with a rush, but we have sought to attach it to something material. Perhaps most of the individuals and groups involved in local communities have turned their thoughts to equipment as a first essential. There was the characteristic response, and there is now inspiring leadership, on the part of the manufacturers of gymnastic and play apparatus, that would settle all of our playground problems with a scheme of material appliances. Iron, steel and wood are clothed in verse and quotation in the catalogues of the manufacturer. The manufacturers, however, have rendered distinguished service as a propaganda agency in the American playground movement, and for that service we acknowledge our gratitude. Success in playground work, however, does not depend conclusively nor primarily upon material equipment.

A properly conceived and well arranged playground will contain a variety of apparatus, but the apparatus should not be looked upon as anything more important than the tent, ropes and bunting of the circus. Lasting interest attaches not to such material things of the circus, but to the human wonders who perform, and back of whom there is great organizing ability, a good business policy, tactful management, and vast knowledge of the history and tendencies of the human family.

It is impossible to discuss, in intelligent manner, the equipment of playgrounds without first setting up a perspective of the playground idea. Equipment is one factor only in the movement and a thoughtful sense of proportion and fitness must guide us in the treating of it. In every effort to establish, equip and maintain public playgrounds, there should be a logical plan of procedure. The Committee suggests the following as such a plan:

1. The starting point should be the organization of a committee, an association, or an expressed intention by a school board, park board, or other legalized body, to take up the work of providing playgrounds.
2. An investigation of the playground needs of the community and the cost of meeting the needs.
3. The securing of funds for purchase, improvement and maintenance of a definite number of playgrounds.

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

4. The selection of playground sites through purchase, hire or gift.

5. (a) The employment (paid or gratis) of architectural and landscape experts, to give the sites selected proper treatment with reference to drainage, surfacing, embellishment, placing and construction of buildings. (b) The employment of a playground supervisor who will assist the architectural and landscape experts, by furnishing expert judgment concerning play spaces, lengths and breadths of courts for games, length of running and jumping paths, provision of storage places and proper places for electric lights, entrances and exits.

6. The selection of apparatus by the supervisor and not by a committee of laymen, nor wholly upon the advice of the manufacturer.

7. The creation of an administrative plan.

It will be observed that the selection of apparatus is placed sixth in the list of seven items of procedure. It will also be observed that the supervisor should select the apparatus.

While there are differences concerning the function and promotion of the movement in various cities, there is, we believe, in all cities, increasing appreciation of the fact that the success or failure of each playground depends very largely upon the supervisor in charge. Thus the Committee believes that since such responsibility rests upon the supervisor, he should be permitted to select his own tools with which to do the work entrusted to his care. They certainly should not be selected by those who know little or nothing concerning the operation of playgrounds.

There are many needs in the playground movement in each community, but the greatest need in every community is a supervisor who may give consecutive thought to *local problems*. The Committee on Equipment, therefore, urges as a first essential, the selection of some person to serve as a supervisor, not for one season only, but for a number of years. The policy of securing a different supervisor each season must be avoided if the playground is to be anything more than an experiment or a passing fad. In the cities and towns where playgrounds are operated for a period of only six to ten weeks in summer, one supervisor might be secured for at least a term of three to five years. A supervisor thus employed, though not an all year resident of the city or town in which the playgrounds are operated, will be able to give consecutive thought to

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

the local problems, become thoroughly acquainted with the people of the community, and better able to demonstrate the possibilities of playgrounds.

STUDY OF EQUIPMENT

A wise manufacturer would not build and equip a factory until he had determined precisely what he wished to manufacture. Likewise he should at least formulate a plan of "cause and effect" before selecting playground equipment. If the thought is to present kindergarten work as part of a play program, then equipment should be selected in the light of kindergarten success and failure. If the thought is to present "intensive farming," a wide range of hand work with tools and materials, the care of a zoological pen, or a moving picture show, as part of a play program, then equipment should be selected with reference to promoting the use of the play spaces for the occupations and amusements that have been mentioned. The Committee, however, believes that its function, at this time, is to present a study of equipment in relation to a given area of ground set aside for out of door play, including games, stunts, and other youthful strivings for individual and group distinction through such physical expression as comes from the use of the larger or fundamental muscles.

A detailed study of playground equipment suggests at the outset, two major divisions of the subject:

Apparatus Accessories

By apparatus is meant the tools and materials by use of which the patrons of the playground derive much of their pleasure and development.

By accessories is meant the items of equipment which give conveniences and comforts, shelter and artistic effects, and the tools and implements which have to do with the upkeep and operation of the grounds.

The *amount* of apparatus to be placed in a given playground must be determined by the area of the space to be used for activities, the approximate number to be served on an average occasion, and the plans of the supervisor with reference to character of activities.

The *kind* of apparatus to be placed in a given playground must

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

be determined by the ages and sex of the patrons, and again, by the plans of the supervisor with reference to character of activities.

The above statements concerning *amount* and *kind* of apparatus apply to playgrounds of any type; whether school-yard, public park, community or village playgrounds.

The question of values in apparatus, *i. e.*, whether a swing is of greater value than a horizontal bar, or whether a sliding board is of greater value than either a swing or a bar, may only be fully answered when the precise function of the playground is stated, and when the plan of operation is set forth in all detail. For general purposes, however, the following principle will serve in the selection of apparatus with reference to values. The principle is given as applicable in the selection of apparatus for any type of playground,—school-yard, public park, home, community or village playground.

A piece of playground apparatus is valuable in proportion as it does three things:

1. Gives the user pleasure.
2. Develops the users' muscles and nerves.
3. Develops in the user, skill, courage and physical judgment.

Thus, a piece of apparatus which merely gives pleasure, without contributing to the development of the muscular and nervous systems, cannot be said to be as valuable as one which does both.

Before selecting apparatus, consideration should be given to a division of play spaces. It is generally agreed, we believe, that children of both sexes, up to approximately ten years of age, may properly occupy the same play space. Above the age of ten, boys should be given a play space apart from the younger children and older girls. Girls above ten or eleven years of age may occupy the same play space with the younger children, but more satisfactory results are obtained when they, as in the case of the boys, are given a separate play space. The ideal arrangement then, is one of three separate and distinct play spaces. The next best arrangement is a separate play space for boys above ten years, and a second play space for girls of all ages and children of both sexes under ten years. The poorest arrangement, but one which has been made to serve a valuable purpose in many cities, is a single play space for both sexes and all ages.

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

SELECTION OF APPARATUS RECOMMENDED FOR VARIOUS PLAY SPACES

ESSENTIAL OR VERY DESIRABLE APPARATUS

FOR A MINIMUM OR SMALL PLAY SPACE FOR GIRLS OF ALL AGES AND BOYS UNDER
TEN YEARS OF AGE

Size of area, approximately 100 x 200 ft. Less than one-half
acre.

Capacity, average occasion, 150 to 200.

1 sand court, 8 x 16 ft.

4 rope swings, approximately 10 ft. high

1 sliding board

2 giant strides

2 teeter boards or teeter ladders

4 sets of ring toss or quoits

A continuous supply of playground balls and bats, nets and balls for
various games, bean bags and similar articles

Approximate cost, purchasing of manufacturer, \$200.00; ¹⁰⁰⁰300.

The apparatus should be so grouped and placed that space for
games will be available without conflict. Perhaps the best arrange-
ment will be secured when the apparatus is placed at the outer
margin of the play space, thus leaving the center for games.

IDEAL LIST OF APPARATUS

FOR AN IDEAL PLAY SPACE FOR GIRLS OF ALL AGES AND BOYS UNDER TEN YEARS

Size of area, approximately 200 x 350 ft. Less than 2 acres.

Capacity, average occasion, 500 to 600.

4 sand courts, 8 x 16 ft.

Cement or wood shelves at the edge of sand courts for molding sand,
or playing such games as "Jacks"

1 wading pool, approximately 50 ft. in diameter

12 rope swings, approximately 10 ft. high

2 sliding boards

4 giant strides

6 teeter ladders

2 sets (5 rings in each set) traveling rings

8 sets flying rings

4 climbing ropes

4 climbing poles

1 set basket ball goals

4 vertical ladders



Photo by L. W. Hine

A COVERED SLIDE AT SEWARD PARK, NEW YORK

A long line of children is usually waiting

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

4 inclined or slanting ladders

6 teeter boards

4 sets ring toss or quoits

A cement or wood platform for dancing, approximately 50 ft. square

A continuous supply of playground balls and bats, basket and volley balls, nets, bean bags and similar articles

Approximate cost, exclusive of wading pool and platforms for dancing, \$1,200.00.

A wading pool 18 inches deep and 50 ft. square may be constructed of cement for approximately 17 cents per square foot. The bottom and side walls of the pool should be approximately 7 inches thick.

The platform for dancing may be constructed of cement for approximately 13 cents per square foot. The thickness of the cement should be approximately 5 inches.

The apparatus should be grouped in such a large area as specified above so that the younger children may possess part of it almost exclusively. It would also be practicable to divide the space with a fence so that the larger girls might play more freely without having the smaller children in the way. In either case, the apparatus should be so grouped and placed that open space will be available for games.

ESSENTIAL OR DESIRABLE LIST OF APPARATUS

FOR A MINIMUM OR SMALL PLAY SPACE FOR BOYS TEN YEARS OR MORE OF AGE

Size of area, approximately 100 x 200 ft. Less than one-half acre.

Capacity, average occasion, 100 boys.

1 high jump set

1 broad jump set

1 pole vault set (2 poles, 1 ten ft., 1 twelve ft.)

6 hurdles

1 shot put set (2 shot, 1 eight, 1 twelve pound)

1 path ten ft. wide for straightaway running

1 relay race set (4 pedestals, boxes or baskets)

1 rope swing

1 horizontal bar

1 pair flying rings

1 trapeze

1 giant stride

1 climbing rope

1 climbing pole

2 sets quoits

A continuous supply of playground balls and bats

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

Approximate cost, purchasing of manufacturer, \$400.00.

The apparatus should be so grouped and placed that space for playground ball and other games would be available without conflict.

IDEAL LIST OF APPARATUS

FOR AN IDEAL PLAY SPACE FOR BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

Size of area, approximately 200 x 450 ft. Little more than 2 acres.

Capacity, average occasion, 300 to 500.

- ¼ mile running track with 120 yard straightaway
- 2 high jump sets
- 2 broad jump sets
- 2 pole vault sets (6 poles, 2-10 ft., 2-12 ft., 2-14 ft.)
- 30 hurdles (adjustable to two heights, 2 ft. 6 in. and 3 ft. 6 in.)
- 4 rope swings
- 3 horizontal bars (1 low, 1 medium, 1 high)
- 2 shot-put sets
- 2 sets (5 rings in each set) traveling rings
- 4 sets flying rings
- 2 trapezes
- 2 giant strides
- 4 climbing ropes
- 4 climbing poles
- 4 vertical ladders
- 4 slanting ladders
- 2 teeter ladders
- 1 buck
- 1 horse
- 1 parallel bar
- 1 basket ball set
- 4 sets quoits
- 1 stop watch
- 1 revolver
- 1 50 ft. measuring tape
- 2 megaphones
- A continuous supply of playground balls and bats, basket balls, cross bars, and other miscellaneous articles

Approximate cost, exclusive of building of running track, \$1,500.00.

The terms "Essential," "Desirable," and "Ideal," also the lists of apparatus given, express the present preferences of the Committee. It is impossible to make any authoritative classification until a more intensive study of apparatus has been made. The

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

apparatus listed has been found very useful and desirable in many playgrounds. Some of the pieces, however, such as teeter ladders, have caused many and serious accidents in some playgrounds, but have been perfectly safe in other playgrounds. It is thought that any supervisor or play leader will be able to eliminate from or add to the lists according to local needs. It will be observed that the above lists do not include specifications for baseball, swimming pool, tennis, hand ball and field hockey.

In the larger areas specified above it may be practicable and desirable to include provision for baseball, tennis, hand ball, field hockey and a swimming pool. In general, however, it is better to set apart ground for games like baseball away from the general play spaces equipped with apparatus, where groups are moving about freely.

For most boys a baseball field is an all-inclusive playground. To give real satisfaction, the area should be approximately 200 x 300 feet. Such an area will give four small diamonds with overlapping outfields suitable for small boys. One of the diamonds should be of double dimensions, or full size, for larger boys. It should be provided with an adequate backstop. Smaller backstops should be provided for the other three diamonds. Probably the smallest area that should be set aside for baseball is 100 x 150 feet. Such an area would make a fairly satisfactory baseball ground for small boys only. In the skating zone baseball fields should be so constructed that they will serve as skating ponds in winter.

For rules concerning areas for hand ball, tennis and field hockey, see the guide books on these games published by the American Sports Publishing Company, 21 Warren Street, New York.

A swimming pool, like a ball field, provides an all-inclusive and ever-satisfying play center for young folks. An out of door swimming pool, made of cement, can be constructed for about \$5.00 per cubic yard. The bottom and walls below grade should be ten to twelve inches thick. Thus, a swimming pool 50 x 60 ft., 8 ft. deep at one end and 3 ft. deep at the other end, may be built, where cement and gravel are not excessively expensive, for approximately \$10,000.00. To the cost of constructing the pool should be added the cost of constructing dressing booths and cleansing baths to be used by all before entering the pool. The maximum capacity of a

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

pool of the dimensions given above is approximately one hundred and twenty-five. Changing groups every hour would, therefore, result in serving one thousand people in a day of eight hours' operation.

HOME-MADE APPARATUS

The question of home-made versus manufactured apparatus cannot be answered conclusively at this time. There is not enough information at hand to warrant unqualified statements. For the large cities with small play areas and a large number of patrons, the manufactured apparatus will be found most available, adequate, cheapest and best. Home-made apparatus may prove adequate in every way in the small community, but it is still an unanswered question as to whether it can be made cheaper on the ground than when purchased of and shipped in by the manufacturer.

There is much virtue in having the boys make their apparatus and equip their own playgrounds, in small towns and villages. That plan, however, is not so commendable for large cities where the factors of time, numbers and more complex responsibilities and relations with legal authorities obtain. In the effort to turn out home-made apparatus in the large playground system, there is also the danger of making of the playground supervisor a mere mechanic instead of a play leader, organizer and wise administrator. The best guide for making apparatus at home, or having local mechanics furnish the parts and work of installation, is "Playground Technique and Playcraft," by Arthur Leland and Lorna Higbee Leland. This book can be procured of the F. A. Bassette Company, Springfield, Mass.

When purchasing apparatus of the manufacturer a specification and guarantee should be drawn. Each piece of apparatus should be guaranteed for a period of two years or more against faulty construction, defective material, and poor workmanship. The manufacturers of apparatus are usually willing to present plans and specifications of what they will furnish. These should be inspected and passed upon by the best available authority.

The question of steel versus wood apparatus cannot be answered conclusively until we have had more experience with both materials in public playgrounds. Wood splinters and rots. Steel seems too hot on hot days and too cold on cold days. It also loses its galvan-

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

ized surface in the large industrial center where the air is heavily laden with sulphur and other chemicals from furnaces.

Geographical location will often determine the choice. In some sections of our country wood is still much cheaper than steel.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

So far as possible the apparatus should be at fixed heights and positions. Adjustable apparatus gives rise to quarrels and accidents.

Running tracks are usually surfaced with screened cinders and loam (black or clay), three parts cinders and one part loam, spread to a depth of three or four inches. The cost of surfacing per square yard is approximately ten cents.

Satisfactory dimensions for running tracks for minimum areas are as follows:

4 laps to the mile center line	167 ft.	Radii 125 ft.
5 laps to the mile center line	135.3 ft.	Radii 125 ft.
6 laps to the mile center line	278.2 ft.	Radii 103 ft.
8 laps to the mile center line	168.2 ft.	Radii 100 ft.

The best way to drain a ball field is to make the area slightly *convex* and only *concave* at the edges where catch-basins should be placed.

ACCESSORIES

Playgrounds should be provided with toilet rooms unless the grounds are immediately adjacent to school or other buildings with available toilet facilities. Any toilet rooms thus provided should be well ventilated and of perfectly sanitary construction and equipment. Careful supervision of the use and cleaning of toilet rooms should be exercised.

Drinking water should be provided by means of a sanitary drinking fountain where the use of a cup is dispensed with and the crest of a bubble only is taken into the mouth.

If possible, shower baths should be provided. A bath at the end of a hose is better than no bath. The bath house might be nothing more pretentious than four walls of canvas without a roof. The floor should be a lattice work of wood placed over a catch-basin to carry off the water rapidly. An adjoining canvas room should be provided as a dressing-room. Its furniture should be three benches, and strips of boards on three sides filled with pro-

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

jecting nails to serve as clothes hooks. Such a shower bath is far better than an unsanitary bath in a basement with poor light and worse ventilation. If shower baths are provided in a building they should receive the same thoughtful care as the toilet rooms are given, or should be given.

In the children's playground seats should be provided for mothers and caretakers of small children. They should be placed near the sand courts.

Shelter from the sun should be provided in all playgrounds, but more especially in the girls' and children's playground. This may be supplied by the use of shade trees, vines trained over a trellis, canvas stretched over a supporting frame of wood or iron pipe.

Shelter buildings, of pavilion-like nature, capable of holding many people in time of sudden rain storms, are desirable accessories; and the same buildings should contain offices and store rooms.

Planting and other artistic treatment of the playground should be given thoughtful consideration and certain action. It is in no sense "nature-faking" to beautify a playground. The fence, gates, posts, shrubs and plants should be used, not only to make an attractive place in which to play, but for the message they convey, which is often carried to the home. We all know that dirt rubs off if water and soap are supplied and placed in contact with the dirty hands and faces of the children. Likewise, cleanliness, art and beauty rub off when supplied in the playground.

The upkeep and general care of the playground will require numerous implements. Rakes, shovels, a lawn roller, crowbar, wheelbarrow, garden hose, hammer, wrench, saw, pliers, screw-driver, sledge-hammer, mallet, step-ladder and brooms will be needed. In the skating zone snow plows and ice scrapers will also be required.

In large areas water taps should be placed at regular intervals so that a hose may be attached for sprinkling all parts of the playground in dry weather.

If the playground is to be at the service of the working boys and girls it should be well lighted at night. Electric light wires carried under ground are better than those carried overhead, for the latter usually interfere with activities and are more dangerous.

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

A first aid equipment should be accessible at all times.

Bulletin boards should be placed at the entrance of all play spaces upon which may be placed rules and announcements.

E. B. De GROOT, Chicago, Ill., Chairman.

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EDWARD B. DeGROOT

General Director of Field Houses
and Playgrounds, Chicago
South Park Commissioners

Few men in the United States are as well qualified as Mr. Edward B. DeGroot to write on the subject of playground equipment. The Chicago South Park playgrounds have gained a world wide reputation and have challenged the admiration of all who have heard of them.

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